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### Book Self-Publishing Best Practices

Erica Jansma

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# Book Self-Publishing Best Practices

by  
Erica Jansma

A project submitted in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of

M.S. Technical Communication

Montana Tech

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## **Abstract**

I have taken a manuscript through the book publishing process to produce a camera-ready print book and e-book. This includes copyediting, designing layout templates, laying out the document in InDesign, and producing an index. My research is focused on the best practices and standards for publishing. Lessons learned from my research and experience include layout best practices, particularly linespacing and alignment guidelines, as well as the limitations and capabilities of InDesign, particularly its endnote functionality. Based on the results of this project, I can recommend self-publishers to understand the software and distribution platforms prior to publishing a book to ensure the required specifications are met to avoid complications later in the process. This document provides details on many of the software, distribution, and design options available for self-publishers to consider.

Keywords: self-publishing, publishing, books, ebooks, book design, layout

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this project to both of my grandmothers. I grew up watching you work hard, sacrifice, trust, and love with everything you have; it was beautiful; you are beautiful; and I hope I can model your example with a fraction of your grace and fruitfulness.  
Thank you for loving me so well.

## Acknowledgements

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Last but not least, I need to thank my amazing support system. Thank you to my mom for encouraging me to go back to school to finish my Master's degree; thank you Andrew Rossiter for patiently listening to me talk through every part of the process; and thanks to my dad, my brother, my sister, and Megan Marler for cheering me on every step of the way. You all watched me laugh and cry my way through this process. Thanks for riding this ride with me!

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## 1. Introduction

The publishing industry, like many other industries, has experienced dramatic changes since the dawn of the Internet era. The biggest change for the publishing industry has been the rise of self-publishing, which allows authors to publish their works independently of the highly exclusive process of traditional publishers. The result of this independence is both the freedom to share one's voice with the masses and also the responsibility of carrying out multiple roles that are typically designated to several people or teams during the traditional publishing process. Whether an author chooses to take on the publishing process entirely by themselves or hire several specialists or a self-publishing company to assist with them, understanding self-publishing best practices will help an author ensure their self-published work meets or exceeds the criteria for a successful book.

Self-publishing has become increasingly popular over the last several years, yet there still exists a cultural stigma towards self-published versus traditionally published books. Thomlison cites several studies that found that e-books carry less prestige than print books, largely due to the lack of gatekeeping involved in their publishing process to ensure that books are professionally edited, designed, and formatted.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, some of this stigma is justified; there is certainly a wealth of evidence that some self-published books are not on par with their traditionally published counterparts. Often when something new is developed, it is rough in its initial stages and becomes more refined as it gains popularity and experience. More people begin contributing, standards and best practices become more recognizable, and higher expectations for output are formed. This is potentially true for self-publishing. The number of self-published authors has continually increased since the 1990s, and many authors have published their own

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<sup>1</sup> Thomlison & Belanger, 2015, p. 308

works without an understanding of the principles and techniques required to create a high-standard book. As the self-publishing industry grows, more software, platforms, and content are generated to better facilitate this process for future self-publishers. The ability to create a professional-looking book through self-publishing is entirely possible with the resources available today, if one knows where to look. I have researched existing literature on publishing in general and self-publishing specifically and applied that knowledge to my own self-publishing project. Through my research, I evaluated various processes and techniques, identified best practices, and noted where credible, peer-reviewed research is missing within this area of study. My evaluation of the literature, along with the experience I gained in the application of this knowledge, helped me to identify the areas that self-publishers need to give attention to during their self-publishing process to ensure they produce a successful book. My project contributes to efforts to better streamline and refine the self-publishing process by evaluating existing literature, consolidating best practices, and contributing my own lessons learned through this process.

## **2. Literature Review**

The following literature review covers three topics of self-publishing: the recent history of the industry, an evaluation of self-publishing processes and available tools, and basic principles of book design and layout. Through this review, I found that current literature offers peer-reviewed, academic, and traditionally published works for two of these topics: the history of the publishing industry and the principles for book design and layout. An area of research that has minimal literature from the academic and/or professional publishing communities is the analysis of current self-publishing tools, techniques, and practices. My research in this area is largely drawn from web-based sources, such as bloggers, self-publishers (based on their



experiences) and self-publishing platforms (often producing content in support of their product and/or service), and small presses. I believe this is largely because self-publishing is a relatively new area of research that has undergone constant change since its birth in the 1990s; with continually evolving and improving technologies and associated processes, there may not yet be enough consistency, stability, or collected data regarding many of the available technologies or processes to make it a worthwhile pursuit for academics and critics to develop *de facto* standards or analysis. This area of research is still in an experimental stage. Through my research I discovered that there are certain technologies that have remained consistent contenders in the self-publishing market, yet there are others that are still new and under review. Projects like mine are needed to vet and finetune the processes and technologies, and may contribute to further peer-reviewed, academic research.

## **2.1. Recent History of the Publishing Industry**

Technological advancements over the last 50 years have dramatically changed the world, the publishing industry being no exception. Publishing a book was once a highly exclusive and competitive feat, with only a fraction of the authors who submitted manuscripts to agents and publishing houses getting through the gatekeeping process. This is now known as “traditional publishing,” as opposed to the new wave in the industry known as “self-publishing.” From the 1950s, when the infamous traditional publisher Random House occupied just a portion of a rented house on Madison Avenue, to the rise of big box stores and shopping malls and the “Big Five” publishers<sup>2</sup>, to the arrival of the Internet, the publishing industry has burgeoned with numerous, accessible modes of delivering the printed word to the masses.

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<sup>2</sup> Epstein, 2001, p. 10-19

At a high level, traditional publishing generally involves the process of submitting manuscripts to agents until one agrees to represent an author. The agent then works to land a book deal with a publishing house. Once the book is sold, an editor at the publishing house propels the manuscript through the editing, formatting, publishing, distribution, and marketing processes. While those steps are laid out simply, the process itself is rarely that; each step is often highly iterative and nuanced for each author and book. It was, and still is, a competitive and elusive market for authors. However, authors are not the only ones who have experienced the increasingly mass-marketed, competitive grind in publishing culture. David Gaughran, author of *Let's Get Digital: How to Self-Publish and Why You Should*, provides an explanation of the traditional book publishing process from the publisher's perspective that sheds light on how book publishing has changed from an exclusive, yet intimate process between authors and publishing houses to the capitalistic game he considers it to be today. Gaughran explains that booksellers buy a large number of books from the publishers with a return policy that allows them to send back any unsold books. Publishers typically make a profit on approximately 20% of the total number of books they create.<sup>3</sup> To make more money, publishers must diversify their retail venues; retailers have significant influence over which books are sold and how they are sold. Publishers are under pressure to find the right balance of offering enticing enough advances to lure in writers, choosing the right books to sell, and marketing them correctly to make profits. The big-name writers often get larger advances, leaving less for the rest of the writers.<sup>4</sup>

For publishers, finding and retaining new bestsellers, let alone bestsellers that become long-term staples, is akin to gambling.<sup>5</sup> With such a competitive and rapidly shifting

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<sup>3</sup> Gaughran, 2014, p. 11

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 12

<sup>5</sup> Epstein, 2001, p. 10-19

environment, publishers have historically relied on their backlists (their books still in print from years past) to maintain a steady income base. At one point in time in industry culture, it was considered an honor for authors to be on a publisher's backlist; however, the industry changed with the rise of syndicated, chain-store retailers, which left publisher's backlists nearly indistinguishable from one another.<sup>6</sup> According to Epstein in *Book Business: Publishing Past, Present, and Future*, this shifted the sense of loyalty authors typically had with specific publishers to authors more frequently relying on agents to get a deal with whichever publisher paid the most. The next major shift arose with the introduction of digital publishing, which made publishing much cheaper and more easily accessible to everyone, irreversibly changing the state of the industry.<sup>7</sup>

Some say that traditional publishing has been unable to adapt to the new digital era of publishing, viewing traditional publishing as a clique-ish group for celebrities and a lucky few who fit the traditional mainstream mold. In this branch of thinkers, self-publishing is the way of the future, offering a platform to the thousands of those willing to raise their voice and present their work to the public.<sup>8</sup>

There are many who do not agree. Susan Barth, who has both traditionally published and self-published books, stated that the self-publishing industry is not taking over. "It's not taking over anything that's already there. It's just that people have an opportunity to release their book in a different way that wasn't accepted by traditional publishing or that doesn't fit into traditional publishing or that has a different goal."<sup>9</sup> Jeffrey Di Leo echoes Barth's statement, backing it up with statistics, "While the traditional publishing numbers since the launch of the Kindle and

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<sup>6</sup> Epstein, 2001, p. 18

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p. 19

<sup>8</sup> Poynters, 2009, p. 19

<sup>9</sup> Barth, 2019, personal interview

Espresso have remained relatively constant, moving from 284,370 titles in 2007 to 309,957 titles in 2012 (a 9% increase), the non-traditional numbers have been off the charts.”<sup>10</sup> Indeed, there seems to be room for both approaches in the publishing industry, although self-publishing has become the leader in growth between the two, with more self-published books being released than traditionally published books.

In 2007, the year Amazon released the Kindle, nearly 75,000 books were self-published in the United States. Those numbers skyrocketed over the next five years; in 2012, there were approximately 393,000 self-published books produced, surpassing the nearly 310,000 traditionally published books produced.<sup>11</sup> According to the 2018-released Bowker database report, which is an authoritative report based on the ISBNs of books published from 2012 to 2017, there was a 38% increase in self-published print books in 2017. The numbers are expected to continue rising, as that same year, CreateSpace announced that it would become a service known as Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP). KDP is Amazon’s print-on-demand self-publishing service for both e-books and print books, which can be distributed through various mediums, both Amazon and non-Amazon platforms, per an author’s decision. In 2017, CreateSpace, Lulu, and Smashwords pulled in 88% of self-published ISBNs reported. Surprisingly, the 2017 report showed that e-book publishing had declined by 13%. Small publishers, defined as those who produce less than 10 ISBNs a year, showed a 4% growth rate.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Di Leo, 2015, p. 2-10

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p. 2-10

<sup>12</sup> “Self-Publishing in the United States, 2012-2017”, 2018

## 2.2. Self-Publishing Process

### 2.2.1. Writing

When beginning the book writing process, many authors open a blank document in Microsoft Word to begin putting words on the page. While Word is one of the most well-known and commonly used word processors, several more sophisticated and versatile writing software options are available on the market that are designed to facilitate better researching, outlining, editing, and formatting along with standard word processing.

The following section outlines pros and cons that Dave Chesson (aka the Kindlepreneur) has described of each<sup>13</sup>.

#### Scrivener

Scrivener is available for Macs and PCs (\$40–45 at the time of this writing). This software offers word processing, project management, and formatting capabilities. The wealth of features enhances its efficiency and effectiveness in drafting a manuscript, making it a popular choice amongst authors. Chesson provides this list of pros and one con:

**Table I: Pros and Cons of Scrivener**

Pros of Scrivener	Cons of Scrivener
Templates available for fiction and non-fiction	Takes time to learn how to use Scrivener's features
File formats available for print and e-books, including .epub, .mobi, .pdf, and .docx	
Conducive UI for long, complex works, i.e., split screen, outliner working views, corkboard with index cards	
Drag and drop capabilities for rearranging	
Provides “project binder” feature to organize, store, and access research files	
More affordable than its closest competitors	

<sup>13</sup> Chesson, “Best Book Writing Software”, 2017

## Microsoft Word

Microsoft Word is a popular choice for word processing; however, Chesson points out that Word is designed to be a general word processor, not a book writing software. It is also much more expensive than other software programs (approximately \$70-150 at the time of this writing). Chesson summarizes the pros and cons as:

**Table II: Pros and Cons of Microsoft Word**

<b>Pros of Microsoft Word</b>	<b>Cons of Microsoft Word</b>
Straightforward formatting toolbar and capabilities	Unsupportive of nonlinear workflows
.docx is a preferred format for many book editors	Difficult to organize and manage long, complex documents
	No e-book formatting functionality

## Google Docs

Google Docs is a free resource that is great for collaborating. It also allows you to access your work from any device. Chesson's assessment of the pros and cons include:

**Table III: Pros and Cons of Google Docs**

<b>Pros of Google Docs</b>	<b>Cons of Google Docs</b>
Access files from anywhere with Internet access	Simple editor not conducive for long writing
File save automatically	
Effective for collaboration	
Capability to export to .epub, .pdf, or .docx	

## yWriter

Another free resource is yWriter, a standalone app designed for fiction writing. It is available for PCs and Androids; iOS is available as a beta version. Chesson's pros and cons include:

**Table IV: Pros and Cons of yWriter**

<b>Pros of yWriter</b>	<b>Cons of yWriter</b>
Breaks down novels into chapters and scenes	Not available for Macs
Automatically stores snapshot backups of work	Does not come with templates
	Does not have e-book conversion functionality

## Ulysses

Ulysses is a word processor option for Macs only (available for \$39.99 at the time of this writing). Chesson says, “Ulysses is a simple yet powerful and customizable app for writing . . . your work syncs automatically between your devices or you can choose to store work locally.” His pros and cons include:

**Table V: Pros and Cons of Ulysses**

<b>Pros of Ulysses</b>	<b>Cons of Ulysses</b>
Capability to export to .pdf, .docx, or .epub	Yearly or monthly subscriptions
User friendly interface	Learning curve to use markdown language
	Not available for PC

## Adobe InDesign

David Bergsland argues that InDesign is not only a strong option for book formatting and exporting options, but also for the preceding writing stage. He says, “You can see on the page [as you write] how clearly the content is being communicated. . . . You will find yourself using styles to make a portion of content more visible (or less visible). You will learn to communicate much more clearly.”<sup>14</sup> Of course, the added bonus to this is that you are able to publish in the same platform that you’ve written your manuscript. InDesign also offers spell check, track changes, and editorial margin notes. Pros and cons of InDesign include:

**Table VI: Pros and Cons of InDesign**

<b>Pros of InDesign</b>	<b>Cons of InDesign</b>
Advanced formatting functionality	Price is monthly subscription model
StoryEditor feature helps organize and work with long, complex texts and layouts	Lose access to work once subscription ends
Capabilities to write, edit, format, and publish from one software	Learning curve to use the software

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<sup>14</sup> Bergsland, 2011

Available for Mac, iOS, Windows, Android, Desktop, and web-based	
Book files facilitate chapter organization and consolidation	

### 2.2.2. Editing

Editing is a crucial step in the self-publishing process. Before spending time with formatting and designing the layout of the book, ensuring the content is organized, coherent, and correct will increase the credibility, professionalism, and overall success of a book. In *Technical Editing*, Carolyn D. Rude and Angela Eaton describe the difference between two separate, but crucial forms of editing: content editing and copyediting. A self-publisher should ensure both are done to their books. Rude and Eaton explain that content editing is when “the editor analyzes the document purposes and makes decisions about the best ways to meet these purposes. The editor may add or delete material and evaluate the reasoning and evidence. The editor also reviews organization, visual design, style, and use of illustrations in order to help readers find and comprehend the information they need.”<sup>15</sup> They then explain that “copyeditors check for correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar; for consistency in mechanics, such as capitalization, from one part of the document to the next; and for document accuracy and completeness. The copyeditor may mark the document to indicate typeface and type size, column width, and page length. Basic copyediting assumes that content, organization, visual design, and style are already established”.<sup>16</sup> While copyediting may seem like a simple task compared to the hearty revisions and critiques of content editing, copyediting is also a crucial final step that saves an author’s professional image and credibility to the readers.

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<sup>15</sup> Rude & Eaton, 2011, p. 12

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p. 13



Sources on the topic of editing seem to unanimously agree that copyediting is not to be overlooked as a simple, second-hand task. Janet Mackenzie, author of *The Editor's Companion*, states that “copyediting is the heart of the editorial process, comprising the essential tasks that must be done to prepare any document for publication.”<sup>17</sup> Additionally, in the article “What I’ve Learned about Publishing a Book,” author James Mulholland notes of his own experience of copyediting his work, “Early on in the production process, I proofread when I did not have other intellectually demanding work. That changed when I realized how engaged I needed to be. Proofreading and correcting copy-edits are not simply the blunt brute work of repetitive reading. Remaining attentive and intellectually engaged is essential.”<sup>18</sup> Imagine how jarring it is to encounter a typo or incorrect grammar while reading a book; readers approach published books with an expectation for clean copy, and copyediting can be a crucial step that separates your self-published book from the self-publishing stigma.

### **2.2.3. Production**

#### **2.2.3.1. Software**

Choosing the most optimal publishing software depends on several factors, including: budget, technical skill requirements, genre of book, intended output formats, and intended distribution platforms. Another factor to consider is whether you are looking for a platform that provides multiple capabilities in one, from drafting to distributing, or if you are looking for software strictly designed for book production and nothing more. For example, perhaps a self-publisher would prefer an all-in-one package, where they can write, edit, and format the book in one application and also receive support for distributing and marketing their book from the same resource. Alternatively, perhaps a self-publisher already has a written manuscript in Word and

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<sup>17</sup> Mackenzie, 2011, p. 161

<sup>18</sup> Mullholland, 2014, p. 228

wants to bypass the fees and restrictions that come with paying a platform to distribute and market the book for them. Below are a few popular options out of the many available, with pros and cons for each choice.

### **Scrivener**

As discussed in a previous section, this software supports authors from the beginning stages of the book writing process through to the publishing stage, providing word processing features, templates for various genres, as well as publishing capabilities. Export options include all common e-book formats (e.g., .epub, .mobi, and .pdf). Its multi-functionality makes it a good option for those at the beginning of the writing process; however, it is also possible to import existing content into the provided templates.<sup>19</sup>

### **Adobe InDesign**

InDesign is a popular layout software in the book publishing industry. Chris McMullen summarizes why InDesign is a strong option for publishing software compared to its competitors by explaining that, “InDesign includes many professional book formatting features, namely page layout and typography. Many of these features are more convenient in InDesign once you master how to implement them.”<sup>20</sup> Author, editor, and writing coach Jennifer Lancaster also details why this software is a reliable choice for book publishers from the traditional sector and self-publishing side alike. InDesign’s strengths include providing more control, consistency, and capabilities than most of its competitors in terms of images, formatting, color, and type. InDesign enables higher quality images than most of its competitors, especially in conjunction with its sister software, Adobe Photoshop. Along with more control over DPI settings, there is consistency in formatting placement such as text and graphic frames alongside other text. There

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<sup>19</sup> “Top Ten Book Publishing Software for Self Publishing Authors”, (n.d.)

<sup>20</sup> McMullen, 2014

is also more control over color than provided with competitors, such as whether images are in CMYK or RGB depending on screen or print export. InDesign also has exceptional font choices through Typekit. The primary disadvantages, according to Lancaster, are that there is a learning curve with using the software and that it is only available through a monthly cloud subscription to Adobe Creative Cloud. Not only is the software only available through monthly subscription, but also users must remain subscribed in order to access their previous work.<sup>21</sup>

The strongest arguments against InDesign come largely from other competitive companies included in the market, including Quark, who blatantly market themselves as the “InDesign Alternative,” including the welcome banner on one of their product pages that states “Welcome InDesign Users.” While this can be considered a biased perspective in some respects, Quark does clearly position itself against identified weaknesses of InDesign and proves to be a reliable book publishing software option.<sup>22</sup>

### **QuarkXPress**

One of QuarkXPress’ most alluring features, in comparison to InDesign, is that it is a one-time purchase. As stated on Quark’s website, many designers prefer the one-time cost over having to “pay ‘forever’ to have access to their work and tools. Many want to own their software because it offers the freedom to open files, access work, and upgrade—all when it’s right for them.”<sup>23</sup> Quark claims to give users unrivaled control over page layout and design and is highly compatible with many platforms and file formats, such as iOS and Android apps, HTML5 publications and responsive HTML5 web pages, fixed and reflowable .epubs, .mobi files, and

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<sup>21</sup> Lancaster, 2017

<sup>22</sup> “InDesign Alternative”, (n.d.)

<sup>23</sup> Ibid

.pdfs. The software also has advanced exporting features, such as “print previews, soft proofing features, comprehensive color management, and support for international color standards.”<sup>24</sup>

Blogger Elise Williams provided an analysis of QuarkXPress and echoed similar strengths as listed above; however, she also noted that:

- “Yearly updates are expensive.
- Tends to crash occasionally.
- Some features are hard to find.
- Lacks adequate layering capabilities like opacity and layer modes”<sup>25</sup>

QuarkXPress and InDesign are often pitted against each other as competitors; both options offer similar functionalities and have a proven track record of being popular, reliable software options for decades. Educba suggests their differences could be because “QuarkXPress focused on adding to more new features rather than improving previous tools and features”; this resulted in QuarkXPress having more tools for layout options, but also less updated functionality compared to InDesign.<sup>26</sup>

## **Microsoft Word**

Microsoft Word has initial appeal as a publishing software, mostly for the advantage it has in being so widely accessible, convenient, and intuitively functional. Most people have Word or have familiarity with using Word. It is possible to format a book with Word, as there are capabilities to set line spacing, margins, kerning, and control widows and orphans. The pre-defined styles also help to create consistent layout for print and e-books<sup>27</sup>. However, Word is not

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<sup>24</sup> “Print Design & Publishing”, (n.d.)

<sup>25</sup> Williams, 2019

<sup>26</sup> “QuarkXPress vs. InDesign”, (n.d.)

<sup>27</sup> McMullen, 2014

designed to be a publishing software, but rather a general word processor, and in this fact lies several shortcomings as a reliable publishing software option.

The biggest issues arise with formatting, especially large files. Creating different running headers for each chapter can be very difficult; section breaks can be used to separate chapters, but this functionality is known to be limited in providing consistent results. There is also a lot of inconsistency with formatting large text boxes and images, especially with consistent text wrapping. Many people can relate to the experience of placing an image in Word and setting it to the desired style, only to return to that location in the document later to see that the formatting has gone awry and the image or text around it has shifted. Using a software designed for publishing ensures that the formatting put in place will be much more precise and remain in place as you continue to work within the document.

Another downside is that Word also does not export to .epub, so another software, such as Calibre, would have to be downloaded to produce said file format.<sup>28</sup>

### **Amazon Kindle Create/KDP**

For those interested in only distributing their works through Amazon, Kindle Direct Printing (KDP) offers publishing features for print and e-books. The platform provides Microsoft Word templates for print books that come formatted with proper page sizes, margins settings, and other book layout features. KDP also offers a Microsoft Word add-on called Kindle Create that provides templates for e-book creation. Using these resources can help to ensure that your publication meets the requirements set specifically by Amazon for distribution, regardless of whether they are the most optimal for formatting in general or if the output is the most

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<sup>28</sup> Lancaster, 2017

professional aesthetic. Another perk to KDP is its capability to translate to 34 other languages.<sup>29</sup> Users can publish on this site by importing files generated from other software; however, e-books published from this source can only be distributed to Kindles and sold through Amazon. This is a considerable limitation of using KDP as a publishing platform (not to be confused with a distribution platform). Another downside is that complex formatting such as “editing of tables, lists, footnotes, and certain paragraphs with complex formatting” and image captions are not supported in this feature for reflowable e-book formats.<sup>30</sup>

### **BookBaby**

BookBaby is another popular all-in-one publishing platform. BookBaby allows self-publishers to create print and e-books; offers professional services in editing, design, e-book conversion, and distributing both print and e-books; provides customer support and publishing specialists to assist at each step of the publishing process; and provides a library of resources on these topics as well.<sup>31</sup>

Reedsy, a reputable publishing network, noted that while BookBaby’s services offer an enticing, streamlined publishing process, their prices can deter some self-publishers, especially anyone who plans to print more than 25 books, convert and distribute e-books, and/or is looking for additional publishing services such as editing and formatting. Most of these publishing tasks can be done for much less via other resources. For example, if a self-publisher were to use BookBaby’s print-on-demand services to print and distribute a 200-page book, the cost would be a minimum of \$500.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> “Top Ten Book Publishing Software for Self Publishing Authors”, (n.d.)

<sup>30</sup> “Getting Started with KindleCreate”, (n.d.)

<sup>31</sup> “Top Ten Book Publishing Software for Self Publishing Authors”, (n.d.)

<sup>32</sup> “BookBaby Review: Read This First...”, (n.d.)

## Lulu

Fliphtml5 describes Lulu as “[a] platform that allows you to create, publish and sell your books for free. It a great platform for the writers with out of the box thinking. Not just this, people who are new to these kinds of software can learn how to publish on lulu.com.”<sup>33</sup> Of course, the offer for free publishing services has its limits, which Dog Ear Publishing addresses, stating “Most people pay far more at Lulu than is charged by other self-publishing companies in the marketplace. Even considering only book printing prices, you pay more in the long run with Lulu using their ‘free self-publishing’ services.”<sup>34</sup> Essentially, Lulu offers free tools to format your book and design your book cover, which is a viable option for self-publishers with enough technical and design skills to create a professional-looking book on their own. However, for self-publishers who require more guidance, Lulu’s services may fall short.<sup>35</sup>

### 2.2.3.2. E-book Conversion

While the content of print and e-books are the same, formatting requires a separate process for each. Print books have a fixed format and usually are exported as PDFs. E-books are completely different. A reader can adjust margin and font size, font type, and orientation, as well as read the book on various devices, meaning e-books need to be created to reflow for a variety of formats. They are coded more like a website than the rigidity of a PDF for a print book. Mill City Press summarizes the difference simply: “print books and their PDF counterparts are rigid and fixed in their formatting, and e-books are made to be flexible and adapt to the user’s specifications.”<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> “Top Ten Book Publishing Software for Self Publishing Authors”, (n.d.)

<sup>34</sup> “Compare Publishers: Lulu”, (n.d.)

<sup>35</sup> Ibid

<sup>36</sup> “eBooks vs Print Books”, (n.d).

When one designs the interior of a print book, one can see the pages exactly as they will look when the book is printed. If there is unusual line spacing between headings or a dangling orphan word by itself on a line, it will also appear that way in every printed version of the book and so should be fixed. E-books do not preserve the formatting of your print book because their usability provides a wide fluctuation in how it will be displayed for various readers. Also, special fonts and characters are often not preserved in e-book formatting. If you want to maintain those specializations, they will likely have to be inserted as an image where possible, or removed or changed to a simpler format. The primary reason for this is that not all e-readers are capable of displaying these types of specializations with their coding. Different e-readers also provide users with the option to change the font type, size, and color from within the device, making any specialized font formatting from the book designer irrelevant.<sup>37</sup>

The authors at Mill City Press emphasize that the most important aspects to consider when formatting an e-book is that it has a “clean and professional” look and will work well on all e-readers.<sup>38</sup> Derek Haines of Just Publishing Advice supports this advice as well, adding that “[p]oorly formatted e-books are a sales killer. So, it is highly advisable to take the time to learn how to check your e-book well before you publish.”<sup>39</sup> The process for checking an e-book file for issues, regardless of the file format, varies depending on the software used. For example, Haines advises that for self-publishers who are converting a Word file into an .epub, it is helpful to use Word’s Styles feature to properly format the manuscript before converting to .epub. This will ensure the structure of the manuscript, such as chapter titles, section headings, and table of

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<sup>37</sup> “eBooks vs Print Books”, (n.d).

<sup>38</sup> Ibid

<sup>39</sup> Haines, 2019



contents, will carry over well during the conversion process.<sup>40</sup> Other platforms, such as InDesign, will highlight expected issues upon export. Self-publishers should make themselves aware of how to vet their e-book file for issues using their chosen publishing software as well as preview the exported file in a previewer such as iBooks, Adobe Acrobat, or KDP Previewer to ensure the visual output is satisfactory.

Before a self-publisher starts the e-book conversion process, they need to decide which file format(s) will be right for them. Deciding which file format to use largely depends on several factors: what tools or resources they have available to them for the conversion process, who will be reading the book, where/what will they be reading it on, and where the book will be distributed. Different software programs are designed with the capabilities to export to specific file types (see the Software section above for details). Your audience is partially determined by where you choose to distribute your book. For example, if you plan to sell your e-book through an online distributor, such as Amazon or Barnes and Noble, an .epub is a compatible option. However, if your book is marketing collateral and will be embedded on your website, perhaps a PDF is a more viable option. The contents of the book also make a difference. While .epubs can generally handle text, graphics, interactivity, or other complex design features, a PDF is only suitable for more text-heavy e-books with little to no visuals.<sup>41</sup> The following list describes the three main file formats for self-publishers to be aware of for e-books.

## **EPUB**

The most widely used and supported e-book format is the .epub, which stands for electronic publication. This file type works on most smartphones, tablets, computers, and e-

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<sup>40</sup> Haines, 2019

<sup>41</sup> Wahl, 2018

readers and also has solid copy and Digital Rights Management (DRM) protection to help prevent piracy. Epubs can be generated as reflowable or fixed format; the better option varies depending on how the .epub will be used.<sup>42</sup> Dave Chesson, the Kindlepreneur, states that reflowable .epubs are “hands down the best option” for e-readers, smartphones, and tablets since they are able to adapt to the device’s functionality.<sup>43</sup> Epubs are HTML-based and open source, making them very easy to create and edit. Changes can be made to the text without any specific software; a user can simply open the source code and edit as needed.<sup>44</sup> Nearly a decade ago from the time of this writing, the .epub had its third major release of the standard, known as the .epub3. According to the International Digital Publishing Forums release publication, “these new specifications significantly increase the format's capabilities in order to better support a wider range of publication requirements, including complex layouts, rich media and interactivity, and global typography features. The expectation is that EPUB 3 will be utilized for a broad range of content, including books, magazines and educational, professional and scientific publications.”<sup>45</sup> While the .epub format has upgraded versions of itself, the file type itself has been the industry standard for quite some time and is projected to remain that way for the foreseeable future. In his article “E-Books as Non-interactive Textual Compositions: An Argument for Simplicity over Complexity in Future E-Book Formats,” Alex Grover states, “An e-book serves its role as an efficient transportation vehicle for information, and publishers might not be incentivized to invest more money in new audiovisual formats of an e-book where more complexity is not only

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<sup>42</sup> Wahl, 2018

<sup>43</sup> Chesson, “EPUB vs MOBI vs PDF: Which eBook Format Is Best for You?”, (n.d.)

<sup>44</sup> Ibid

<sup>45</sup> Conboy, et al., 2011

unnecessary but also unwanted.”<sup>46</sup> For most forms of e-book conversion and publication, .epub is the most versatile and user-friendly file format, making it the industry’s standard.

## **PDF**

Adobe created Portable Document Format (PDF) files and brought about the birth of e-books in the 1990s. While they are still a usable format for some e-books, they do not have the functionality or compatibility required for most e-readers. They maintain a fixed format, which can be useful for certain documents, layouts, and design features; however, this aspect can also make them more difficult to read on smaller screens. PDFs are similar to fixed layout .epubs; however, they do not have as strong of DRM protection, meaning they are easier to download and share for free, and they also do not have as much interactive ability as a fixed layout .epub.<sup>47</sup> The PDF fixed format is most commonly used for reference books and textbooks, comic books, and children’s books, but not adult and young adult fiction.<sup>48</sup>

## **MOBI/AZW**

Mobi files are formatted specifically for Amazon Kindle. In 2005, Amazon bought mobipocket.com and the .mobi file came with it. Amazon supported the .mobi file until 2011, when they essentially rebranded the .mobi file as an .azw file. An .azw file is the exact same file structure as .mobi, but with a different name, enhanced DRM protections, and a reflowable functionality. Amazon KDP and some other online distributors still accept .mobi files; however, support is typically only offered for the .azw file format. Since they are no longer supported, .mobi files are only acceptable depending on which type of device it will be downloaded and

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<sup>46</sup> Grover, 2016, p. 180

<sup>47</sup> Wahl, 2018

<sup>48</sup> “The epub format: advantages and limitations”, 2019

read on. The successor to .azw files is the .azw3 file. This upgrade supports HTML5 and CSS3. Azw and .azw3 files can be created with Amazon's free command-line tool called KindleGen.<sup>49</sup>

### **2.2.3.3. E-book Publishing**

A self-publisher has several options for publishing an e-book, including utilizing conversion tools offered specifically through certain self-publishing companies, such as KDP and Lulu, or selecting a publishing software that has the capability for formatting and exporting to e-book formats. While using a self-publishing company's custom-made conversion software has benefits, such as easy-to-use templates and files properly formatted specifically for that company's platform, there is also appeal in using software unaffiliated with specific publishing companies. The decision is largely based on factors such as where a self-publisher plans to distribute, how much freedom they want with their files, technical skills, and software already available to them. Below is a description of some of the most popular choices on the market for e-book publishing at the time of this writing.

#### **Adobe InDesign**

InDesign is a reliable option for generating reflowable and fixed format .epubs and is compatible with Mac and Windows operating systems. The .epub conversion process is simple to do, allowing self-publishers to create well-designed print and e-books within the same program. The drawback is the subscription fee and technical skill required to use InDesign; however, if a self-publisher has chosen to use this software, the fact that it is capable of e-book conversion along with the writing, editing, formatting, and print exporting makes it a versatile, robust option.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Chesson, "EPUB vs MOBI vs PDF: Which eBook Format Is Best for You?", (n.d.)

<sup>50</sup> Fussell, 2018

## **Calibre**

Calibre is a free software that converts Word to .epub and .mobi files. This e-book converter is a popular and attractive option as it is free and open source. It is available for Windows and Mac, although historically it has been more popular with Windows users. The founder of Calibre says, “Today Calibre is a vibrant open-source community with half a dozen developers and many, many testers and bug reporters. It is used in over 200 countries and has been translated into a dozen different languages by volunteers. Calibre has become a comprehensive tool for the management of digital texts, allowing you to do whatever you could possibly imagine with your e-book library.”<sup>51</sup> One of the main drawbacks to Calibre is that it cannot open DRM-protected files.<sup>52</sup>

## **Scrivener**

Scrivener is a software for purchase that allows self-publishers to work on their projects from beginning to end in one place. As mentioned in previous sections, it is also a useful software for creating manuscripts and editing. Additionally, Scrivener can export to many file types, including Microsoft Word documents, .rtf files, PDFs, .epubs, and Kindle e-books. It is available for Windows and macOS and iOS.<sup>53</sup>

## **Amazon KDP**

Amazon KDP has a free downloadable desktop application called Kindle Create that allows users to format imported files into KDP-approved e-books. If a self-publisher only plans to distribute their book on Amazon, Kindle Create can be a useful resource for formatting an e-book. This free, downloadable application allows users to upload .doc/docx, .txt, .rtf, or PDF

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<sup>51</sup> Goyal, 2009

<sup>52</sup> Ellis, 2017

<sup>53</sup> “Features”, (n.d.)

files and utilize a user-friendly UI to format an e-book, eventually exporting as a .kpf file. This application can export as three different file types:

- A reflowable .kpf file (This is great for novels, memoirs, and essays.)
- An interactive print replica (KDP explains that this format is “typical for textbooks, travel books, and cookbooks. Print Replica e-books maintain the look of their print editions and offer many of the advantages of standard Kindle e-books. However, they don’t allow the reader to resize text and are only available on certain devices.”)<sup>54</sup>
- Comics with a guided view (This is designed for comics and provides the functionality to animate panel-to-panel movement.)

## **Lulu**

Lulu offers a free conversion tool called Lulu EPUB Converter that helps self-publishers to turn a .doc or an .rtf file into an .epub. For a price, Lulu also offers .epub conversion packages to convert your manuscript into an .epub for you.<sup>55</sup>

### **2.2.3.4. Printing**

There are three types of printing used today: letterpress, offset, and digital. Understanding the different types of printing in conjunction with the specifications for a particular book, the intended audience, and the method(s) of distribution will shape what type of printing a self-publisher choose for their self-published book. Letterpress is the Gutenberg-style press that involves covering type, engravings, or etched metal in ink and then rolling paper over it to transfer the image or letters onto the paper, one page at a time. While this press historically has

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<sup>54</sup> “What is Kindle Create? What kind of books can it help me create?”, (n.d.)

<sup>55</sup> “eBook Formatting and Publishing”, (n.d.)

transformed our literary world, it is rarely used for book production today unless a publisher is printing a fine, specialized edition book or has unreliable access to electricity. The other two forms of printing are much more commonly used today.<sup>56</sup>

Offset printing was developed by accident at the beginning of the twentieth century when it was noted that “an image transferred to paper by a rubber covered cylinder was actually sharper than the image from the original type.”<sup>57</sup> This form of printing eventually took over from the letterpress and is still used today in two different forms: sheet-fed offset and web offset. The Book Designer explains that “[o]ffset printing is used for the majority of books produced today. Web offset is used to make mass market paperbacks, like the ones sold in racks at supermarkets and at airports, and for very large printings of other books. Sheet-fed offset book printing offers the best quality reproduction of artwork and photography, and is the most flexible when it comes to the number of sizes offered for books and the different kinds of paper available for printing.”<sup>58</sup>

The third form of printing is digital printing, which facilitates the print-on-demand model that most self-publishers use. The Book Designer explains that “[t]he major difference between letterpress and offset printing, on one hand, and digital, on the other, is that digital printing is designed to create one copy of a book at a time. The other, earlier methods of printing produce books in stages, and only work efficiently when producing many copies at once. . . . Larger publishers are moving their backlist books to digital printing, saving money on warehousing and shipping. The self-publishing phenomenon has created a huge demand for digital printing through print-on-demand distribution, since it has eliminated almost all of the cost of putting a book into print.”<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> “Making Printing Choices”, (n.d.)

<sup>57</sup> Ibid

<sup>58</sup> Ibid

<sup>59</sup> Ibid

Kayla Hollatz from [convertkit.com](http://convertkit.com) recommends print-on-demand for self-publishers for several reasons: it saves time (self-publishers do not have to do any of the packing or shipping), the book remains easily editable (most online platforms allow self-publishers to make changes and reupload their book file), and there is no overhead cost or need to store inventory of books.<sup>60</sup>

While Amazon Kindle Direct Printing holds the greatest market share as both a printer and online retailer for self-published books, there are other options for print-on-demand printers who also distribute books worldwide to physical locations, such as bookstores, libraries, and schools, as well as online retailers, including Barnes and Noble. Two popular printers for print-on-demand and e-book distribution along with Amazon include IngramSpark and Lulu. Each of these platforms offers more services than just the printing and distribution of books; self-publishers can choose their platform based on price, reputation, and the multi-service packages that can be offered through one central platform (i.e., editing, cover design, and publishing consultation services). When researching printing options, self-publishers should also consider whether a platform allows them to retain their rights over the book and control over where else it can be used and distributed, whether they can set the prices themselves, and the percentage of royalties they would receive.

Another option for self-publishers to consider for their publishing needs is a small press, for not only printing, but a range of publishing services. Paige Duke from Standout Books Publishing Services defines a small press as “an independent publishing house that has a fully staffed publishing team—think editors, proofreaders, designers, and typesetters—but runs a smaller operation than the big-name publishers.” Duke lists several benefits of this option, including:

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<sup>60</sup> Hollatz, 2018



- More involvement from professionals than a self-publishing platform and possibly even a traditional publishing house (fewer clients, more time for attention)
- More freedom to use outside-the-box methods for publishing and marketing decisions (this could be especially useful for content that is unconventional or in a specialized niche)
- Quicker turnaround times
- More control over terms of contract (smaller presses are often more open to negotiations than traditional publishers or self-publishing platforms)
- Opportunity for awards, as small presses often submit their work to literary contests.

However, Duke also provides drawbacks for self-publishers to consider, including the fact that small presses operate on smaller budgets, often meaning smaller advances than traditional publishers or higher costs from your pocket than self-publishing. Additionally, small press companies can vary widely. It is important to research their quality of work, contracts, and success rates before committing.<sup>61</sup>

Author and independent adviser Eliot Peper suggests considering these questions:<sup>62</sup>

- What will you be able to accomplish by publishing with them that you can't do alone?
- What promotional efforts will they commit to *a priori*?

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<sup>61</sup> Duke, 2018

<sup>62</sup> Peper, 2015

- Do they have a specific audience or relationships with influencers that are relevant to your book?
- Do you get along on a personal level and do you want to cultivate a long-term business relationship with their staff?
- Is their contract clear and fair?
- How will working with them impact your career as an author?

#### **2.2.3.5. Legalities (Copyrights, ISBNs, Barcodes)**

In addition to actually writing, producing, and selling a book, self-publishers are also responsible for obtaining their own copyright registration and ISBN information. This section provides an overview of the legalities a self-publisher should address.

The Oxford English dictionary defines copyright as “the exclusive legal right, given to an originator or an assignee to print, publish, perform, film, or record literary, artistic, or musical material, and to authorize others to do the same.” Dan Poynters, author of *The Self-Publishing Manual*, says that “Your work is automatically copyright protected under Common Law the moment you type it because you created it and put it on paper—it just isn’t copyright *registered* yet.”<sup>63</sup> A self-publisher will register their book at [copyright.gov](http://copyright.gov) to obtain copyright.

Any self-publisher who plans to sell their book will also need the 13-digit International Standard Book Number (ISBN), and will need one for each new edition of the book that is submitted afterwards. ISBNs are not the same as copyright, although the ISBN is placed on the copyright page of the book. The ISBN is an internationally recognized, unique identifier for books and can be issued at any point in the writing process. Barcodes are also representations of the ISBN intended for scanners; this is technically only necessary if a publisher plans to sell in a

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<sup>63</sup> Poynters, 2009, p. 41

bookstore as opposed to only online distribution. However, many publishers include a barcode regardless.<sup>64</sup>

Bowker is the official ISBN distributor in the United States. Bowker's website clearly explains the ISBN's purpose: "Using ISBNs allows you to better manage your book's metadata, and ensure maximum discoverability of your book. Your book is listed in Bowker Books in Print®, which is used by all the major search engines and most bookstores and libraries."<sup>65</sup>

Some publishing platforms, such as KDP or IngramSpark, offer their own ISBNs for free or at a fraction of the cost of getting one through Bowker or another ISBN agency. While this is a convenient option, it also limits authors to only selling the book assigned that ISBN to the issuing platform. For example, KDP issues KDP ISBNs, but authors can only sell those books through Amazon. The downside to this is that you will have to purchase a different ISBN if you decide to sell it elsewhere, and this can complicate the tracking of your book, as technically the same edition will be under two different identifiers. ISBNs are required for print books intended for sale; however, ISBNs are currently not required for e-books, although still recommended for identification and tracking purposes.<sup>66</sup>

#### **2.2.4. Distribution**

According to Dave Chesson, there are two types of distributing options for self-publishers: online retailers and aggregators. Online retailers, such as Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and Kobo, sell books directly and provide the author a larger share of the profits. When a self-publisher submits their book to an aggregator, such as BookBaby, PublishDrive, Draft2Digital,

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<sup>64</sup> Friedlander, 2010, p. 7

<sup>65</sup> ISBN.org by Bowker, (n.d.)

<sup>66</sup> Giammatteo, 2016

or Smashwords, the aggregators will send the book to over 40 other retailers. While this cuts into a self-publisher's profits, it significantly increases the distribution audience.

On the one hand, online retailers are enticing, especially considering that Amazon currently holds 85% of the book market. On the other hand, aggregators such as Draft2Digital distribute to a wide range of global retailers, including Amazon, for a 15% cut of the profits. Self-publishers can also choose options such as the aggregator BookBaby, which not only offers distribution services to all major print and e-book retailers, but also provides services for nearly all stages of self-publishing, from formatting and cover design to publishing to marketing. At the time of this writing, BookBaby's complete e-book package starts at \$1,699. The correct option depends on the author, their intended audience, their budget, and their goals.<sup>67</sup>

Another argument throughout current literature is that pursuing a place for books on bookstore shelves is no longer worthwhile and that exclusively online distribution is the most effective and efficient option for self-publishers. While Poynters encourages authors to know their markets and how to reach them when deciding how to distribute, he strongly encourages self-publishers to sell online whenever possible.<sup>68</sup> IngramSpark argues the opposite, stating that while Amazon currently dominates the business, many independent brick-and-mortar booksellers still exist and are trying to make a living in this highly competitive market. For self-publishers looking to support the independent book-publishing and -selling community, finding the right bookstores to connect to the local community and to market their book topic is a viable option.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Chesson, "Best Self Publishing Companies", (n.d.)

<sup>68</sup> Poynter, 2009, p. 24, 89

<sup>69</sup> "How to Sell Your Self-Published Book to Bookstores", (2018)

### 2.2.5. Promotion

Most self-published authors do not have the time or freedom to do a full, in-person book tour; fortunately, the digital age has enhanced the marketing techniques available to self-publishers. Rob Dircks, self-published author of *Where the Hell is Tesla*, discusses the marketing techniques he used to sell over 18,000 copies of his book, which includes the “online-only path: website, social media, Amazon author pages, and an email list.” Dircks also recommends requesting book reviews—if a book has enough reviews, it will trigger Amazon to also start recommending it to others. Authors can also leave a call to action at the end of the book, thanking readers for taking the time to read the book and asking them to leave a review if they enjoyed it. Dircks says there are also reviewers for Amazon, Goodreads, and Audible. By frequently reaching out to them, he was able to gain reviews from them as well in exchange for a free copy of the book.<sup>70</sup>

In “A sharper conversation: book publishers’ use of social media marketing in the age of the algorithm,” Sybil Nolan and Alexandra Dane discuss social media’s role in effective marketing practices. “Social media marketing (SMM) emerged as a distinct subfield of marketing circa 2008, as the advent of the smartphone confirmed the potential ubiquity of social media (SM) platforms such as Facebook (FB) and Twitter. Since then, SMM has established itself as a dominant pillar of contemporary marketing practice, thanks largely to the parallel rise of data analytics which enable the targeted use of SM data collected in real time or over significant periods.”<sup>71</sup> Nolan and Dane note that “[e]ven before the launch of Amazon’s Kindle e-reader (2007) and Apple’s iPhone (2008 in Australia), marketing scholars had published research showing that customer reviews on Amazon.com and Barnesandnoble.com appeared to

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<sup>70</sup> Dircks, 2017

<sup>71</sup> Nolan & Dane, 2018, p. 153-154

influence book sales.”<sup>72</sup> <sup>73</sup> Indeed, online platforms such as social media sites and online retailers are an undeniable influencer in book sales.

Nolan and Dane cite Melina Hughes’ study on Twitter usage in U.S. publishing houses, which unveiled a shift in Twitter content between 2010 and 2017. In 2010, most publishers posted little to no direct promotional content, whereas by 2017, “around 80% of tweets contained content directly related to titles on the publisher’s list.”<sup>74</sup> While social media was originally built to establish connections and build social communities, it is now undeniable that it plays a direct role in data analytics—it is a driving force in establishing an online presence and reaching a wider online audience. Nolan also emphasize the value in a publisher’s ability to utilize SEO in their social media posts to capitalize on filtering algorithms.<sup>75</sup>

While online marketing is a vital step for self-publishers, other experts argue that traditional forms of marketing still have a place in the industry. Ron Callari writes, “What’s old is new again. Just because self-publishing is a by-product of the digital age, doesn’t mean we just discard the entire traditional book marketing tactics of the past.” In his article “Self-Publishing Best Practices by the Experts,” Callari cites Jill Bennett, a book-marketing specialist at LitFire Publishing, as predicting the marketing trends for 2015 to be a blend of the old and new. Bennett states that while social media marketing will continue to grow, “it will not replace traditional book marketing—marketers will learn to use them in conjunction with one another, which is the recommended practice. . . . A combination of the old and the new will maximize outreach.

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<sup>72</sup> Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006, p. 545–560.

<sup>73</sup> Nolan & Dane, 2018, p. 155

<sup>74</sup> Hughes, 2017

<sup>75</sup> Nolan & Dane, 2018, p. 155-158

Traditional tactics include radio media, television advertising, reading tours (and) editorial writing.”<sup>76</sup>

Mulholland also supports a similar premise as Callari and Bennett, offering several suggestions for marketing techniques that combine new and old techniques, including:

- “Creating a personal web site
- Soliciting attention from related blogs
- Contacting relevant scholarly societies
- Sending books to alma maters and using alumni networks as publicity mechanisms
- Including the name of the book in the self-publisher’s email signature
- Sending copies of the book to every conference the self-publisher attends”<sup>77</sup>

### **2.3. Book Design and Layout**

In the publishing world, books are almost always first judged by their covers; unfortunately, many self-published books may have been overlooked because of this. A self-publisher’s understanding and application of basic typography and design principles for both book covers and the pages within can play a crucial role in setting their work a shelf above the rest, if you will, in the highly saturated market of self-published books. The following subsections describe best practices for the key typography and design principles that a self-publisher should apply.

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<sup>76</sup> Callari, 2015

<sup>77</sup> Mullholland, 2014, p. 233

### 2.3.1. Genre Analysis

*Literary Devices* defines genre as “a type of art, literature, or music characterized by a specific form, content, and style. For example, literature has four main genres: poetry, drama, fiction, and non-fiction. All of these genres have particular features and functions that distinguish them from one another.”<sup>78</sup> Self-publishers/designers need to know which genre their work falls into and what the particular features and functions for that genre are. A first step towards this is understanding the intended audience for the book. An article from Tubik Studio states that “[b]ook designers must [ . . . ] consider the audience that a book is intended for since the typographic choices made will be used to speak to that particular audience.”<sup>79</sup> Cover designer David Pearson advises designers to “get into the habit of asking yourself whether letters have the right tone or temper rather than just the correct optical balance.”<sup>80</sup> Carolyn Knight and Jessica Glaser also support the importance of genre analysis when choosing design elements; they explain that “typographic treatment works alongside verbal language to create, enhance and alter meaning. While the aesthetic value of design is always important, the significance of type in influencing meaning should not be underestimated.”<sup>81</sup> Indeed, readers bring certain expectations, subconsciously or consciously, to a book’s design. Understanding an audience’s expectations, norms for particular genres, and cultural and emotional impact that certain typographical choices make are important when designing a book.

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<sup>78</sup> “Genre”, (n.d.)

<sup>79</sup> “8 Typography Tips for Designers: How to Make Fonts Speak”, 2017

<sup>80</sup> Inglis, 2017

<sup>81</sup> Knight & Glaser, 2012



### 2.3.2. Cover Design

In the Foreword to *Classic Penguin: Cover to Cover*, Audrey Niffenegger beautifully captures the position of a book cover in today's book industry, stating:

More than a million books were published on earth in the year 2013, according to UNESCO. Many of these were self-published; many were e-books; most of them sold a few hundred copies at best. In a world of extreme competition for the affections of readers, physical books have to be alluring. They have to be intellectually sexy, these flowers of culture; they have to be colorful, innovative, strange, and wonderful. In the Darwinian library jungle a book has to advertise its charms or be overlooked.<sup>82</sup>

Book cover design plays an important role in determining a self-published book's success in terms of sales. Dan Chesson, the Kindlepreneur, gives a case study of a self-published author who was selling a mere average of 15 books per month until he updated his cover design to adhere to better design principles and then tripled his sales. His marketing plan or book contents did not change, only the book cover. Chesson explains that no matter how well written a writer's book may be, if it has a poor cover design, it will not sell.<sup>83</sup>

Stacie Vander Pol discusses key fundamental principles to adhere to for visual layout when designing a book cover, beginning with the Rule of Thirds, which entails making a 3x3 grid on your cover and then aligning the page elements according to several rules. The first rule is that covers are most appealing when the elements on the page cross at the divisions of thirds instead of at the center or far sides. Secondly, a designer can add emphasis to certain elements, either words or images, by placing them directly at the intersection of the grid lines to enhance a focal point. Lastly, based on the Gutenberg Diagram, Vander Pol explains how readers' eyes

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<sup>82</sup> Buckley, Niffenegger, & Rotor, 2016, p. 14.

<sup>83</sup> Chesson, "Book Cover Design", (n.d).

follow a diagonal flow from the upper left to lower right corner of a page (especially in Western culture, as that is the direction we read text). Designers should consider this diagonal flow as they arrange the hierarchy of elements on the page, noting that the top left corner and bottom right will be where the reader will likely expect to see crucial elements, such as a title. Breaking these expectations creates discord in the reader's mind and decreases their likelihood of considering the book any further. Be sure to put the most important information in-line with the reader's eye tracks. These principles are the groundwork for anyone planning to design their own book covers and should be used as a springboard for further research to finetune a book cover design.<sup>84</sup>

Chesson also summarized what he considers to be the key guidelines to follow when designing a book cover, which include:

- Send a clear message
- Adhere to genre expectations (this ensures the books draws in the correct audience)
  - Chesson gives a great tip: in general, non-fiction appeals to the mind while fiction appeals to the heart.
- Choose an appropriate, effective font
- Use colors that complement and contrast well enough
- Ensure your images stimulate intrigue
- Ensure the cover works well even as a small thumbnail (think scrolling through Amazon)

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<sup>84</sup> Vander Pol, 2014

- If you have a series, brand them all well enough together
- Test your covers before committing using sites such as PickFu, which provides you feedback from actual users on which cover is better liked<sup>85</sup>

When it comes to images, James Mullholland suggests that a book cover does not need to be a literal depiction of the book's contents, i.e., pictures of the main characters or scenes, but rather symbolically represent the contents in an eye-catching way to draw the reader in enough to open the book and perhaps even go as far as to read it.<sup>86</sup> Stephanie Shields also argues further that it is not just the accuracy or effectiveness of the book cover's depiction of the book's contents that sells a book, but rather how well the chosen cover images can marketed and "look sharp in advertising."<sup>87</sup> On the other hand, Ashley Fettes states that typography selection has become increasingly important on book covers due to the rise in e-books, as the small thumbnail image that readers view before clicking on a book requires larger text.<sup>88</sup> Jazmin Welch points out that "this idea also alludes to why type-only book covers have been trending in the past few years and continue to be popular."<sup>89</sup> <sup>90</sup> Whether designing a print book or e-book, a designer will benefit from considering the basic principles outlined above.

### 2.3.3. Type

According to Ellen Lupton in *Thinking with Type*, selecting a typeface requires consideration of several factors: the genre of content, the history of the typeface, what modern society associates with said typeface, and the way the typeface actually looks within the design. The key is to find a balance between the right aesthetic and the right historical and modern

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<sup>85</sup> Chesson, "Book Cover Design", (n.d)

<sup>86</sup> Mullholland, 2014, p. 230.

<sup>87</sup> Shields, 2003

<sup>88</sup> Fettes, 2012, p. 3

<sup>89</sup> "The Most Beautiful Book Covers Of The Year Are All About Type", 2016

<sup>90</sup> Welch, 2018

connotations of the typefaces to pack the right punch for the intended purpose. All of this is highly contextual—fonts do not have rigidly assigned meanings to them; this is something a tactful designer considers holistically in the context of their particular design and uses keen judgment.<sup>91</sup>

In book design, font variations will typically show up in varying degrees of hierarchy, either on the cover as the title, subtitle, author’s name, and any additional text, or in the interior pages, often as chapter titles, subtitles, headings, subheadings, and captions. Lupton suggests mixing typefaces for an effective visual experience. She compares mixing fonts to making a salad, where each ingredient should bring a different taste and texture to the mix. She advises to “strive for contrast instead of harmony” and explains that “[w]hen mixing typefaces on the same line, designers usually adjust the point size so that the x-heights align. When placing typefaces on separate lines, it often makes sense to create contrast in scale as well as style or weight. Try mixing big, light type with small, dark type for a criss-cross of contrasting flavors and textures.”<sup>92</sup> However, another well-respected name in the graphic design realm, Nigel French, provides contrary advice in his book *InDesign Type*. He states “A good principle to live by, whether you’re new to typography or a seasoned pro, is to keep it simple. Or to put it another way: don’t use too many fonts.”<sup>93</sup> Then again, Williams suggests a bit of a hybrid between French and Lupton, advising to “[a]void using two or more typefaces that are similar. If the items are not exactly the same, **make them different!**”<sup>94</sup> Clearly the use of type is a matter of judgment and artistic license to some degree, yet the general principles seem to be true for most:

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<sup>91</sup> Lupton, Ellen. (2010): 32

<sup>92</sup> Ibid, p. 54

<sup>93</sup> French, 2018, p. 220

<sup>94</sup> Williams, 2015, p. 84

either keep it simple and clean, or if attempting to mix types, ensure there is adequate contrast to make it purposeful and effective.

James Craig, author of *Designing with Type*, weighs in on how to select a typeface, specifically serif versus sans serif fonts. Craig argues that serif fonts are easier to read, especially for long texts, although younger generations are increasingly used to seeing sans serif fonts on screens and thus also have their place. Craig explains:

You will find that the serifs on a typeface facilitate the horizontal flow necessary to comfortable reading. As Helvetica does not have serifs, some readers find it difficult or uncomfortable to read. The designer should consider this before deciding whether to use a serif or sans serif typeface for any given job. Serifs not only facilitate the horizontal flow but, small as they are, help to identify the individual letters. They make every lowercase letter unique and, therefore, more immediately recognizable. . . . Having said this, it is important to realize that there is a generation of adults who have grown up reading sans serif typefaces and in many cases prefer the sans serif to the serif. . . . An excellent example of a good use of sans serif type can be found in any telephone directory. However, there is a difference between looking up a single name in a directory and reading a lengthy novel. Once again, attempting to understand preferences is determined in part by what it is we are asked to read.<sup>95</sup>

Mill City Press also advises on choosing typefaces, advising designers to avoid “wild, distracting, or mismatched fonts for their book's body copy that don't match the norms of the genre.” Their guidelines state that for fiction, memoirs, and (auto)biographies, use a classic serif font; for nonfiction reference books and textbooks, use a sans serif font with justified alignment;

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<sup>95</sup> Craig, 1992, p. 123

and for children's books, fonts can be more decorative as long as they match the theme of the overall book and illustrations.<sup>96</sup>

#### **2.3.4. Word, Letter, and Line Spacing and Alignment**

Spacing is a crucial consideration for book designers, from the letters to the words to the lines between them. Letterspacing, also known as tracking, defaults in most word processors to normal, with additional options for tight or very tight; however, for the keen-eyed, involved designer, there are some specific letter combinations that are optimized by reducing the space between them. This varies depending on the typeface being utilized. When it comes to word spacing, James Craig explains that “[w]ords placed too closely together force the reader to work harder to distinguish one word from another. Words placed too far apart result in large spaces that look like ‘rivers’ running down the page, creating a vertical emphasis that disrupts the movement of the eye from left to right.”<sup>97</sup> One common factor that influences word spacing is the textual alignment.

Robin Williams advises designers not to justify text unless they are able to avoid awkward spacing between words.<sup>98</sup> Nigel French is a bit more lenient in his suggestions for text alignment, especially for continuous reading. He says that it is really a matter of personal preference, within common sense. To avoid the awkward spacing sometimes produced by justified alignment, he advises implementing the process of glyph scaling, which is a technique to adjust the width of the characters to avoid said alignment pitfalls. This functionality is not available in all word processors or publishing software; in particular, French is referring to InDesign's glyph scaling functionality.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> “How to Choose an Interior Font for Your Book”, (n.d.)

<sup>97</sup> Craig, 1992, p. 127-129

<sup>98</sup> Williams, 2015, p. 42

<sup>99</sup> French, 2018, p. 197-102

Linespacing, or leading, also has great impact on legibility and esthetics. There are several factors that influence the degree of linespacing needed, two of which are serif and/or sans serif typefaces as well as the size of the typeface. James Craig explains that sans serif fonts typically require more linespacing than serif fonts, in terms of legibility. He says, “Serifs on the individual letter help promote the horizontal flow of reading. Sans serif types, lacking this aid, tend to have a vertical emphasis. In order to compensate for this, more leading is required.”<sup>100</sup> While the size of the typeface also affects linespacing, there is not a set amount of space required for any particular typeface. Craig explains, “The linespacing must be proportionate to the point size of the type. If 10-point type requires 2 points of linespacing, 14-point type will probably need 3 points of linespacing. Conversely, very small faces need proportionately *more* linespacing to make the small type more readable, less dense.”<sup>101</sup> The correct amount of spacing, whether it is words, letters, or lines, does not follow a mathematical equation but ultimately requires personal preference and discernment, keeping in mind two important factors: legibility and esthetics.

### **2.3.5. Alignment**

According to Williams, alignment helps to organize elements’ hierarchy on a page. A good rule of thumb is to make sure you are aligning elements with other elements on the page, regardless of how far apart they are spaced from each other. Williams also suggests avoiding using too many text alignments on a page; for example, if most of the text is left-aligned throughout, do not right-align some of the text. Williams says to avoid center alignment as much as possible, unless you have a clear, conscious reason for doing so; for example, if you are

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<sup>100</sup> Craig, 1992, p. 129

<sup>101</sup> Ibid, p. 130

creating a formal, dignified vibe on the page.<sup>102</sup> Craig agrees that alignment is a fundamental principle in page design, encouraging the use of a grid to properly align design elements and “impart a sense of unity to the entire job.”<sup>103</sup>

Furthermore, Williams encourages unity through repetition in design, explaining that the repetition of certain colors for a specific theme or the placement of certain elements, images, or icons throughout a piece help to represent the same concept throughout.<sup>104</sup>

### 2.3.6. Contrast

In *Graphic Design Basics*, Amy Arntson also discusses unity within page design; however, she adds a different note to Williams' encouragement discussed above. Arntson states:

Symmetry is balance through likeness; asymmetry is balance through contrast. The easiest way to achieve visual unity would be to make one shape into an overall symmetrical pattern on the page. A full book page with nothing on it but a solid block of type is visually unified, no matter what the words say. It is also visually dull. In the case of novels, this visual dullness is deliberate. The reader is directed to the content of the words without distraction. . . . Most successful designs rely on a carefully juggled balance of similarities and contrasts.<sup>105</sup>

Contrast is an important concept to consider in book design. According to Williams, contrast helps to create a visual hierarchy of the elements on the page, both with size and color.<sup>106</sup> Significant differences in scale create dynamic effects in designs. Lupton explains that designers can use the scale of different letters on the page to create hierarchy of importance,

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<sup>102</sup> Williams, 2015, p. 54

<sup>103</sup> Craig, 1992, p. 152

<sup>104</sup> Williams, 2015, p. 55-68

<sup>105</sup> Arntson, 1993, p. 54-55

<sup>106</sup> Williams, 2015, p. 69



contrast, depth, and movement; this is useful for distinguishing between titles, headings, subheadings, captions, and body text.<sup>107</sup>

### 3. Process and Product

My project entailed publishing a 300-page print book and converting that into an e-book. The book, titled *Identified Flying Objects*, was written by Dr. Michael Masters, an anthropology professor at Montana Tech. In reference to the publishing steps outlined in “Self-Publishing Process” section of the literature review above, I was responsible for a part of the editing and the production aspects of the book. When the book was camera-ready, Dr. Masters handled the distribution and promotional aspect of the self-publishing process. The following sections describe the individual steps of the process to produce the print and e-book.

#### 3.1. Copy Edit

The first task in this project was to perform a light copy edit. The manuscript was still with the editor when I started the project in September. When the editor sent the first six chapters back to Dr. Masters, he sent them to me to review the edits, accept those that I thought were justified, leave the edits that might have changed the meaning of the sentence for Dr. Masters, and review the text for any other errors I encountered along the way. This is the one part of the project that I regret, as I’ve come to realize through this experience and my research that copyediting is a crucial task that requires focus and attention to detail to ensure the manuscript is as clean and ready for formatting as possible. Numerous studies show that copyediting is a crucial step for book publishing, and often one that sets apart self-published books from traditionally published books.

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<sup>107</sup> Lupton, 2010, p. 42

I did make corrections while I accepted the tracked changes from the editor, and I made many more edits where needed while working closely with the text during formatting. I even made a few sweeps through the book for specific grammatical issues I repeatedly encountered, such as hyphenated compound adverbs ending in -ly and the incorrect use of en and em dashes. Dr. Masters also made edits as he recorded the audio book.

Because the edits were delivered to me in two phases and because I was also approving the content editor's changes, I decided to wait to migrate the Word document into InDesign until the edits were complete. This allowed me to send the edits that made significant style changes or possible changes to the meaning of the text to Dr. Masters, and it allowed me to start working on the light copy edit as soon as I received the first six chapters of edits instead of having to wait until the entire book was submitted.

If I did this process over, I would not have combined the two tasks of accepting the content editor's changes and performing a thorough copy edit into a single task, but would have made the two separate tasks. While the book eventually turned out well overall, our approach resulted in us having to retrace our steps more than necessary to fix errors that were missed in the initial copyedit. I would have also ensured that the edit was done in Word so that Dr. Masters would have an up-to-date copy of his manuscript in Word instead of progressively making changes to the text in InDesign throughout the publishing process.

### **3.2. Design Templates**

Between receiving the first six chapters and the last six chapters from the editor, I began to design the templates. This task took some time, as I had a big learning curve in the area of design and typography. I researched typographic best practices, tips, and tricks, as well as design concepts. I researched how to select fonts for specific genres and types of books (for example,

textbooks, novels, and nonfiction). I researched how to select book size, font size, line spacing, and margin size. I reviewed several well-known books from genres similar to *Identified Flying Objects* and noted the different elements within each book, such as page number location, running headers and footers, paragraph spacing and indentation, and the chapter title pages. With all of the information I gathered, I created four templates to present to Dr. Masters and let him select which he liked best. We ended up choosing one based largely on a book that Dr. Masters lent me to use as an example of a style he liked—*Black Holes & Time Warps: Einstein's Outrageous Legacy* by Kip S. Thorne. We added some elements from other templates that he liked as well and formed the final template.

### **3.3. Merge Duplicate Endnote References**

Before migrating the manuscript into InDesign, there was one more issue to address in the Word document. The editor recommended to Dr. Masters that any duplicate endnote citations throughout the text be merged together as one citation using the “Merge Endnotes” feature in Word. Dr. Masters asked me to complete this task before migrating the document to InDesign. This required me to go through the 500+ endnotes and highlight the duplicates across all 12 chapters. Dr. Masters originally entered headings for each chapter in the Endnote section, but kept continuous numbering throughout the chapters instead of starting over at 1 for each chapter. The numbers were also formatted in Roman numerals, which became very lengthy when they reached the higher numbers. To make the Endnotes more navigable and aesthetically pleasing and to conform to best practices, we decided to only merge the duplicates found within each chapter and change the Roman numerals to standard numbering.

### **3.4. Software Decisions: Word or InDesign**

A lot of the research I did stated that KDP did not accept .epub files; however, it is listed on the KDP website as an accepted file type for e-books. KDP has their own add-on through Microsoft Word called Kindle Create, which KDP recommends as the best option for producing a consistent, quality e-book. InDesign (the software I originally chose to create the template designs) does not export to .mobi or .azw files; however, most of my research indicated that InDesign is a more sophisticated software for consistent, quality layout and design for both print and e-books. Still, I questioned which software would be the best option for this particular project. Since the manuscript was already in Word, I could use the KDP templates for the print book to set the appropriate margins for our selected book size and use Kindle Create to generate the e-book. While I did not find research to confirm this, I suspected that KDP suggested using Kindle Create because a) it is their own product, and b) most users may not know how to use or have access to a program like InDesign and would instead submit something without proper formatting. I discussed the options with Dr. Masters and decided to stick with the original decision to use InDesign for the print and e-book because InDesign has an overall better industry reputation for producing consistent layout, and also because Dr. Masters planned to distribute his books on more platforms than just Amazon, so an .epub file would be more versatile.

### **3.5. Format Document in InDesign**

#### **3.5.1. Transfer Styles from Word**

There is conflicting advice about how to place an already formatted Word document into InDesign. Some recommend to clear all formatting, then place the “clean” copy into InDesign, and apply all the formatting to the InDesign document using InDesign styles. Others recommend using Word’s Style feature to format the document; while migrating a Word document to

InDesign with only direct formatting applied rarely transfers consistently, the two applications work surprisingly well if Styles are applied and carried over. To ensure that I did not miss any details in the original formatting of the manuscript (e.g., headings, subheading italicized text, superscripts and subscripts within equations), I used the pre-defined Styles feature in Word to apply the formatting to the manuscript in Word. I named my styles in Word the same as I did for the Paragraph Styles in the InDesign template so they merged in an organized manner.

Most of the formatting remained in place with the imported manuscript; however, in hindsight I would not consider this a best practice. I did notice some inconsistencies in the formatting after placing the Word document into InDesign, so I ended up going through the entire book in InDesign anyway to ensure everything converted consistently. If the Word document would have been originally created entirely with Styles instead of mixed with direct formatting, the migration may have been a more efficient decision since that extra formatting step would have already been completed.

### **3.5.2. Endnote Decisions**

The next decision I had to make was how to satisfy Dr. Masters' preference to have all the endnotes at the very end of the book instead of at the end of each chapter or as footnotes. Until 2018, InDesign only offered an option for footnotes. The fairly new endnote feature is set up to only allow dynamic endnotes at the end of each chapter file, not an entire book file. I considered importing the entire manuscript into one InDesign file, as Adobe says that InDesign can handle up to 900 pages in a single file; however, a computer requires a fair amount of RAM to be able to save this enormous file repeatedly without crashing. My computer (a standard MacBook Air) does not have such power. So, I made a book file, as this is the standard practice for multi-chaptered files/books, and decided to find a workaround for the end-of-book endnotes.

My solution was to import static instead of dynamic endnotes from Word to InDesign. This allowed me to split the chapters into individual files and not lose their consecutive numbering across the book (if I split the chapters up with dynamic endnotes, they would begin renumbering at one in each chapter, and I would lose the value of the endnote file from Word that contained all 482 endnotes in consecutive order). Once the chapters were all split into their own files, I copied and pasted the endnote file from the Word doc and made that its own file as well. The problem with carrying over endnotes statically is that they lose their superscript formatting. So, while I managed to get the book file set up to have endnotes at the end of the book, I now faced two issues: all of the in-text endnote references were normal-sized numbers instead of superscript and would need to be manually styled, and when it came time to convert the book to an e-book, these endnotes would not convert to dynamic endnotes because they were simply styled text. My solution was to do that manual formatting for each in-text reference and to manually style the endnote page to fit conventional endnote formatting. For the e-book, I would either make all the endnotes into cross-references to the endnote section at the end (which would involve finding a workaround to make the cross-references “round trip,” meaning they can point back and forth to each other from endnotes to in-text reference), or the other option would be to manually go through the book again and create actual endnotes or footnotes. I found several scripts, specifically by Peter Kahrel—a well-known, reputable individual who kindly makes scripts for InDesign to utilize the many features that are not readily included in the UI. I hoped that I would be able to use one of these scripts to make the process more automated, but my limited knowledge of coding prevented me from succeeding at this approach.

### 3.5.3. Apply Styles to All Elements, Anchor Images, Create Tables

At this point, I had decided on InDesign as the software and figured out how to get the manuscript's endnotes migrated over in a way that matched the scope of the project. After importing the chapter files into InDesign, I went through each chapter and ensured all styles were properly applied. I also had to format the figures and tables. To format the images, I created Object Styles in InDesign to ensure the images were anchored to the paragraph directly beneath them, and included a text wrap and center justification. This styling was useful when I converted the book to the reflowable .epub, as it ensured the images stayed in the correct place in the text regardless of the size of the text or screen on which the .epub would be viewed. There were three tables in the book. Two of them were small enough to be created as regular tables in the text. Creating a table in InDesign is a fairly straightforward process; like most of the steps I undertook during this project, I relied on Lynda.com videos and youtube.com to learn how to create, style, and resize the tables appropriately. The third table was quite large—it had 20 rows and 6 columns, one of which was named “Summary” and included prose-like text. The table was too wide to fit legibly within the pages of a 6 x 9 book. I created the table in Word, saved it as a PDF, took a screenshot, and placed the JPEG file into the InDesign file. I had to split the table into two separate files to fit horizontally onto two facing pages in the book. I had to make a setting for the pages to stay together as a set within the flow of the text so that they didn't end up splitting onto a front and back of the same page and stayed on facing pages. I also had to anchor these to ensure they stayed in place for the reflowable .epub. Despite my best efforts, KDP rejected this table when the file was uploaded for publication because they said it would not be legible for people reading on a desktop to read a horizontal table. Touché, Amazon! I ended up redesigning the layout of the table so that it could be placed in portrait mode within the .epub and clearly display all the information.

### **3.6. Create Index**

The index proved to be one of the most labor-intensive and time-consuming aspects of this project. Due to my lack of knowledge of the subject matter and the time constraints of the project, I asked Dr. Masters to compile a list of approximately 20 key terms to build the index from. He sent me a list of a little more than 300 keywords (including topics and subtopics) to search and index throughout the book. This is what I used to build the index.

I broke down the process into a few steps. First, I searched for each term in each chapter and recorded the specific chapters and subsections where they were located. Once I identified the general locations of each term, I went through each chapter one at a time and searched for the terms that were a part of that chapter. Using the InDesign's index feature, I added a tag to those places within each chapter the terms were discussed. This was a very time-consuming task. I did not just search for the words and add a tag to every instance in the book, as some instances were not substantial enough to warrant a reference in the index. On the other hand, there were sections that discussed a topic without using the exact keyword used in the index. I had to read through these sections to locate the appropriate place for a tag, which is where the reader would eventually be directed when using the index.

Indexing is a complex process. I could have used a more simplistic approach and simply tagged all instances of keywords and nothing more. I also could have been much more complex, generating a more thorough index to include more synonyms and cross-references between related topics. I did this as much as my common sense could bridge connections or as much as Dr. Masters suggested in his list. I also tried to organize topics by nouns and not adjectives and to follow best practices for how to create subtopics.



Fortunately, updating an index is a simple process in InDesign, so even as final edits adjusted page numbers, the data was not lost. It also converted from print to .epub without any issues.

### **3.7. Final Edits**

As the production process continued, we made changes and improvements to the text. This included copyedits such as spelling errors, fixing orphans and widows, fixing alignment of headings that split onto two lines in the text as well as alignment of headings in the table of contents, resizing some photos, and more. It is important to have time to see the book in a final form to be able to adjust once you can see it as a complete whole. Some of these changes may have been avoided had we done a more thorough copy edit in the beginning; however, some of the changes were style preferences or issues that arose from formatting that needed to be checked at this stage. In addition to copy editing, it is important to do page proofs to check for formatting nits.

### **3.8. Create e-book**

Creating the e-book required making a copy of the book file (a simple Save As) and making the changes to the print book required to convert to e-book. This included some formatting changes as well as some technical changes, each of which are described below.

#### **3.8.1. Rearrange Front Matter**

E-books tend to have less front matter than print books. One of the main reasons for this is because Amazon “Look Inside” feature allows potential buyers to preview a section of the book, and authors would rather use this valuable space to showcase the main body text of their book instead of the front matter pages. To streamline the front matter of the e-book, I removed

the half title page and moved the Acknowledgements and Author Bio pages to the back of the book behind the index.

### **3.8.2. Updated Table of Contents**

Epubs automatically generate a built-in table of contents when exported; however, the table will default to include the file names instead of the specifically worded entries that you select (i.e., the names of the chapters), and it will be styled with default styles. In order to create a table of contents that includes a title, chapter entries, and page numbers styled in a customized way consistent with the rest of the book, I needed to create a new table of contents style in InDesign. The Table of Contents setting draws on the predefined styles made in the Paragraph Styles and has the option to make the chapter entries into clickable links. I created Paragraph Styles for the table of contents and set up the new table of contents within the Table of Contents setting in InDesign to draw on those styles and ensure the chapters were clickable links. This ensured the e-book had a hyperlinked table of contents that was styled consistent with the rest of the book and included the chapter headings, sections, and subsections that Dr. Masters wanted to be included.

### **3.8.3. Formatted Frontmatter Pages for Spacing, etc.**

Because e-books are reflowable and individual pages are not set, frontmatter pages such as the epigraph and title pages became merged together, indistinguishable from one another. In order to maintain the look of each of these pages, I made them into images and placed them into the files that way. This ensured that the text remained centered on its own “page” when readers swiped through those pages.

#### **3.8.4. Convert Endnotes to Dynamic Endnotes**

The endnotes proved to be a challenge with the e-book. The functionality in InDesign only allows dynamic endnotes to appear within each .indd file (which was each individual chapter for this book). This meant that I had to replace the static endnotes I created for the print book with dynamic endnotes in each chapter. The biggest challenge for this was the fact that early in the publishing process we had merged the duplicated endnotes in the Word manuscript so that repeated citations had the same citation number throughout the book. At this stage of the project, time was becoming one of our biggest constraints. I had the choice to identify where the merged endnotes existed throughout the book and re-enter all of them endnotes individually to get their own citation number, or take a different approach. Dr. Masters and I decided that in the cases where there were duplicated endnotes in the chapter, the first instance would be dynamic, and the following instances would be static. I tried creating text anchors and bookmarks to link to for the duplicated endnotes; however, InDesign did not have the functionality to send the reader back to the same place within the text that they had been reading, since there were multiple places within the text that were associated with the duplicated endnotes (some endnotes were duplicated up to four times within a chapter). I decided to upload the e-book with static duplicated endnotes, and the e-book passed Amazon KDP's inspection when I submitted it for publication

#### **3.8.5. Convert Dynamic Endnotes to Footnotes**

About two months after the book launch, we received Quality Issue messages from KDP regarding the “broken” endnotes. Receiving these messages results in a warning notice on the buyer's page in the Amazon UI, which of course is not ideal. This meant that my plan to leave

the duplicated endnotes as static would not suffice; I ended up creating individual footnotes for every duplicated footnote. This resolved the issue.

### **3.9. Upload to KDP**

Uploading the .pdf and .epub files to KDP is a fairly simple process that provides a preview of the published product. When the files were complete, I uploaded them and the book. I did not publish the book; I notified Dr. Masters that the files were uploaded so he would also review them and then submit for publication. After we completed this process, the book was available for purchase on Amazon, and we held the book launch that week.

### **3.10. Product Discussion**

The book launch was successful and both the print and e-books were made available for purchase for without troubles. Eventually, we received a few quality notifications from Amazon. The first issue came a couple weeks after the launch and was caught by Dr. Masters—a small typo that would be a simple fix. I made the correction and reexported the files as both .pdf and .epub. InDesign’s default for .epub export is “Fixed Format” instead of “Reflowable”; unfortunately, after making the typo correction, I forgot to select “Reflowable” upon export. The preview that automatically showed up on my Mac in iBooks still looked good, so I uploaded to KDP and published. Unfortunately, this generated our first Amazon review—a one star rating due to formatting issues. Because the .epub was in fixed format, the words appeared merged together on smaller devices. This was a simple correction, but it felt like a serious kick in the gut to receive a negative review for such a simple oversight, after months of tedious diligence every step of the process. As mentioned above in section 3.9.5, we also received notifications from KDP that the static endnotes would not suffice. I was able to fix those endnotes and create functional, correct endnotes for each citation instance throughout the book. The final notification

we received from KDP was regarding the image formatting. This notification came as a surprise, as both Dr. Masters and myself had meticulously set the images to the requirements that KDP specified in their requirements documentation. While it was frustrating to receive “quality issues” alerts on something that I had worked very hard to make into something of quality, I am glad that KDP has a vetting process in place to ensure self-published books receive a degree of gatekeeping to raise the standard of this sector of the industry. Most of the issues we faced were problems that arose because of lack of experience with the process; if I were to do this again, a lot of the manual labor and retracing of steps and errors would be reduced because of the knowledge I gained through this experience.

### **3.11. Conclusion**

Considering that I started this project with a very beginner-level understanding of InDesign and no prior experience or training in book publishing, I learned an immense amount about the software and the publishing process over the last year. I wrote the literature review with the intention of providing a roadmap to anyone who finds themselves in a similar situation as me: trying to publish a book and not knowing where to start or options exist to even consider. I believe my research is valuable and provides a thorough overview of the processes and considerations self-publishers should be aware of when beginning their own publishing projects. My research coupled with my direct experience leaves me with several key lessons learned:

- Copyediting is important, should be done as a single, focused task before formatting begins in order to avoid having to retrace steps in the editing and formatting processes.
- Understand the capabilities and limitations of the software chosen for publishing and stay within those boundaries. I tried to find workarounds to the endnote issues

we faced in InDesign and would have saved a lot of time if I complied with the InDesign functionality and changed the book layout accordingly (i.e., endnotes at the end of each chapter instead of the end of the book).

- InDesign does not come with a Merge Endnote feature; do not use the Merge Endnote feature in Microsoft Word if you plan to publishing the book in a software that does not have compatible functionality.
- Many aspects of book publishing are tedious, repetitive, and seemingly simple; however, it is important to remain diligent even during the mundane aspects of the process as they can result in big errors.
- There are a lot of useful software options for writing, editing, and formatting a book. If a self-publisher is at the beginning of the process, it is worthwhile to consider a software option that allows users to do all of these aspects with one application.
- There are a lot of distribution options available, and it is worthwhile for self-publishers to research their options before defaulting to Amazon. While Amazon is the leader in book sales, some self-publishers might find value in aggregators and/or independent bookstores.
- Book design is a complex art and can have a huge impact on the success of a book. Understanding cover design principles and typography are worthwhile pursuits for self-publishers.

My findings will be valuable for myself in any future publishing endeavors as well as for the larger self-publishing community. As the self-publishing industry continues to rapidly grow and evolve, this project contributes information to the effort amongst the self-publishing

community to improve self-publishing processes and standards. I hope that my research and documented experience will provide guidance to self-publishers on best practices as well as mistakes to avoid.

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## 5. Appendix A: Potential Book Layout Templates

The following images are the templates I created for the *Identified Flying Objects* page layouts, including type, spacing, contrast, and alignment choices. I presented these templates to Dr. Masters; he chose Template A, and we made refinements to details such as linespacing and running headers.



## Template A

1

# 1

## This is the Chapter Name

*This is a quote related to IFOs by a famous smart person.*

– First Name Last Name

*This is another quote related to IFOs by a famous smart person. This quote is a bit longer, just for the sake of example. It takes up several lines on the page, pontificating on scientific reasoning and the like. Let's add one more line, just for fun.*

– First Name Last Name

### 1.1 Section Title

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#### 1.1.1 Subsection Title

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## Template B

# 2

## This is the Chapter Name

*This is a quote related to IFOs by a famous smart person.* – First Name Last Name

*This is another quote related to IFOs by a famous smart person. This quote is a bit longer, just for the sake of example. It takes up several lines on the page, pontificating on scientific reasoning and the like. Let's add one more line, just for fun.* – First Name Last Name

### 1.1 Section

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#### 1.1.1 Subsection

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## Template C

3



### THIS IS THE CHAPTER NAME

*This is a quote related to IFOs by a famous smart person.*

– First Name Last Name

*This is another quote related to IFOs by a famous smart person. This quote is a bit longer, just for the sake of example. It takes up several lines on the page, pontificating on scientific reasoning and the like. Let's add one more line, just for fun.*

– First Name Last Name

#### 1.1 Section

Vent omni diciunte eatemporem assit quidebistiam ex eosam, estibus none quunt pra ilit es aut et ea dendi utendis sam, tet harum sit maiore nis et aut aspit earum andae ea incipitatur assim ressim nditiam qui officieturi ut aut abor as es aut audae etur aturepe rferis quias et officit ent aut atus ipsant ut officipic tem diam acculla boressi omnis estis nat faccusamus.

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